Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the applications:

Listing of Claims:

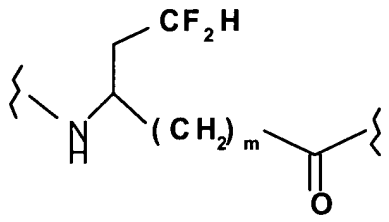
Claim 1 (currently amended): A fluorine containing oligopeptide of formula:

Y-B-A-X ~~or Y-B-A'-X'~~

(FORMULA I) ~~(FORMULA II)~~

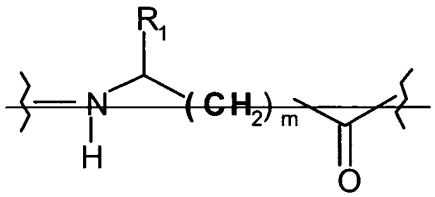
wherein:

A is an amino acid residue of formula:



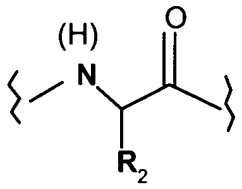
where m is 0 or 1.[[.]]

~~A' is an amino acid residue of formula~~



~~where m is 0, or 1 and R_1 is a fluorine-substituted hydrocarbyl side chain containing from 1 to 15 carbon atoms;~~

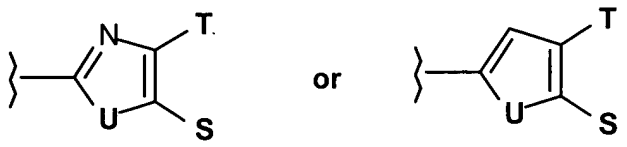
B is a naturally or non-naturally occurring amino acid residue of formula:



wherein R_2 contains from 1 to 20 carbon atoms is a non- polar, or polar but uncharged sidechain or is a side chain containing an acidic functionality;

X is selected from the following:

$-CO_2R_8$; -H; $-OR_8$; $-CF_3$; $-CONR_9R_{10}$; $-CF_2CONR_9R_{10}$; $-NH.SO_2R_{25}$ or a heterocyclic group of formula:



wherein U is sulphur, oxygen or NR_{11}; R_8, R_9, R_{10}, R_{11} and R_{25} are, independently, hydrogen or a lower alkyl, lower alkenyl, aryl, or aralkyl group, and S and T are each independently either H or R_{12}, where R_{12} is a lower alkyl, lower alkenyl, aryl or aralkyl group, or can together form a ring; ~~X' is OH or $-NHSO_2R_{25}$, where R_{25} is as defined above~~; and Y is selected from (i) and (ii) below:

(i)

wherein C is a natural or non-natural amino acid residue having a non-polar, polar but uncharged, or acidic side chain containing from 1 to 20 carbon atoms;

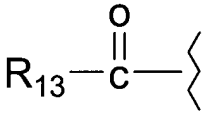
D may be absent, but where present is a natural or non-natural amino acid having a hydrophobic side chain containing 1 to 20 carbon atoms;

E may be absent, but where present is a natural or non-natural amino acid having an acidic side chain containing from 1 to 20 carbon atoms, or is a dicarboxylic acid containing up to 10 carbon atoms;

F may be absent, but where present is a natural or non-natural amino acid having an acidic side chain containing from 1 to 20 carbon atoms, or is a dicarboxylic acid containing up to 10 carbon atoms; and

Z may be absent, -H, or a group of formula R_7CO^-, where R_7 is a group containing from 1 to 20 carbon atoms which is chosen such that the group R_7CO^- together with the nitrogen atom to which it is attached forms an amide, urethane or urea linkage;

(ii)



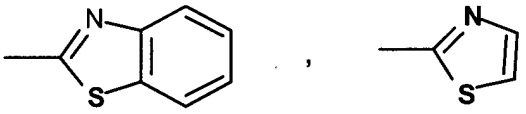
where R_{13} is an aliphatic or aromatic group containing from 1 to 25, carbon atoms and 0-5 oxygen atoms, 0-3 nitrogen atoms, O to 2 sulphur atoms and up to 9 other heteroatoms which may be the same or different;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or ester thereof.

Claim 2 (canceled):

Claim 3 (original): An oligopeptide of Formula I or a salt or ester thereof according to claim 1 wherein X is selected from:

$-CO_2H$, $-CONHCH_2Ph$, -H, -OH, $-NHSO_2R_{25}$ (where R_{25} is as defined in claim 1),



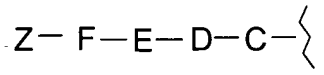
Claim 4 (original): An oligopeptide of Formula I or a salt or ester thereof according to claim 3 wherein X is selected from: -H; -OH; -COOH, and $-NHSO_2R_{25}$.

Claim 5 (currently amended): An oligopeptide of Formula I ~~or II~~ or a salt or ester thereof according to claim 4 ~~claim 1~~ wherein B is selected from: glutamic acid and aspartic acid, 2-

aminobutyric acid, 4,4-difluoro-2- aminobutyric acid, alanine, isoleucine, valine, leucine, cysteine, phenylalanine, naphthylalanine, β-cyclohexylalanine, and proline.

Claim 6 (original) An oligopeptide, salt or ester according to claim 5 wherein B is selected from β-cyclohexylalanine, leucine, glutamic acid and 4,4-difluoro-2-aminobutyric acid.

Claim 7 (currently amended) An oligopeptide, salt or ester according claim 6 ~~claim 1~~ wherein Y is a group of formula:



and C is selected from: alanine, isoleucine, leucine, phenylalanine, valine, norleucine, norvaline, glutamic acid, glutamine, aspartic acid, α-t-butyl glycine, α-cinnamylglycine, homoleucine, 3,5 dichlorophenylalanine, 2-thienylalanine, 3-bromophenylalanine and α-cyclopentyl glycine.

Claim 8 (original): An oligopeptide, salt or ester according to claim 7 wherein C is selected from: isoleucine, glutamic acid, α -cyclopentylglycine, t-butyl glycine and valine.

Claim 9 (currently amended): An oligopeptide, salt or ester according to claim 8 ~~claim 7~~ wherein D is selected from: methionine, isoleucine, leucine, norleucine, valine, methyl valine, phenylglycine or diphenylalanine.

Claim 10 (original): An oligopeptide, salt or ester according to claim 9 wherein D is leucine or diphenylalanine.

Claim 11 (previously presented): An oligopeptide, salt or ester according to claim 9 wherein E is selected from glutamic acid, aspartic acid, succinic acid and glutaric acid.

Claim 12 (original): An oligopeptide, salt or ester according to claim 11 wherein F is selected from glutamic acid, aspartic acid, succinic acid and glutaric acid.

Claim 13 (original): A tripeptide of formula:

Z-C-B-A-X"

in which A, B, C and Z are as defined in claim 1 and X'' is a carboxylic acid group ($-CO_2H$), amide group ($-CONR_9R_{10}$) or hydrogen; or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or ester thereof.

Claims 14-19 (cancelled):

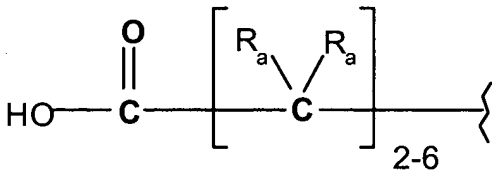
Claim 20 (original): A fluorine containing dipeptide according to Formula I of claim 1 wherein:

X is -COOH;

B is leucine; and

Y is a group of formula $R_{13}CO-$ where R_{13}, is as defined in claim 1; or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or ester thereof.

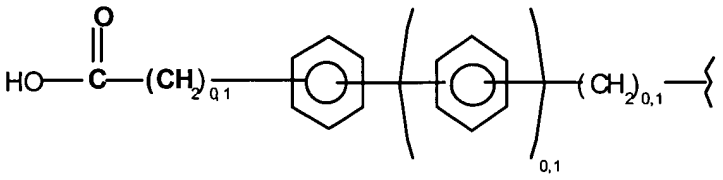
Claim 21 (currently amended): A dipeptide, salt, or ester according to claim 20 wherein R_{13} is a group of general;



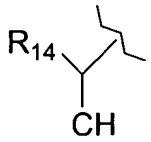
wherein each R_a is independently selected from hydrogen, lower alkyl, lower alkenyl, lower alkoxy, optionally substituted aryl or aralkyl groups or two R_a taken together result in the formation of a three to seven membered aliphatic or aromatic ring which optionally contains at least one heteroatom.

Claim 22 (original): A dipeptide, salt or ester according to claim 21 wherein at least one group $-C(R_a)_2-$ is replaced by -O-.

Claim 23 (original): A dipeptide, salt or ester according to claim 21 wherein R_{13} is a group of formula:



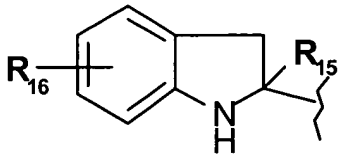
Claim 24 (previously presented): A dipeptide salt or ester according to claim 20 wherein R_{13} is a group of formula:



where R_{14} is a cycloalkyl or optionally substituted aryl group.

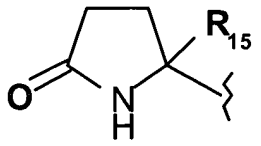
Claim 25 (original): A dipeptide salt or ester according to claim 20 wherein R_{13} is a group selected from:

(a)



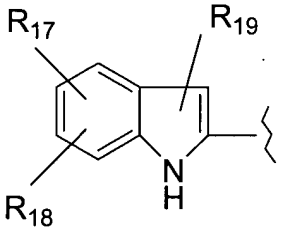
where R_{15} is hydrogen, an optionally branched, optionally interrupted and optionally substituted lower alkyl or lower alkenyl group or an optionally substituted aralkyl group, R_{16} is hydrogen or an optionally substituted and optionally interrupted lower alkoxy or aryloxy- group;

(b)



where R_{15} is as defined above; and

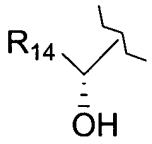
(c)



where each of R_{17}, R_{18} and R_{19}, independently, is selected from hydrogen, optionally substituted lower alkyl, lower alkenyl and lower alkoxy, optionally substituted aryl, aralkyl, aryloxy or aralkoxy, a carboxylic acid group optionally as its lower alkyl ester, a halogen, cyano, or CF_3 group.

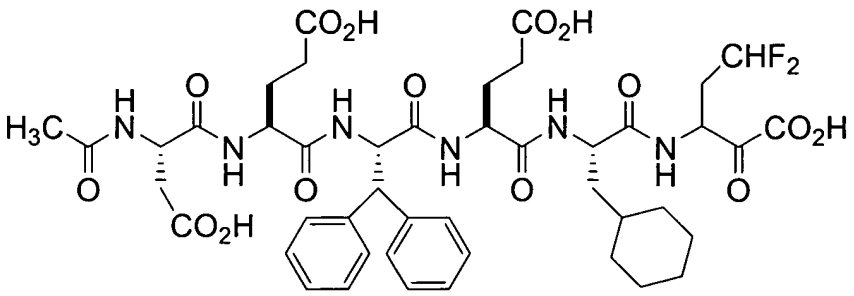
Claims 26-30 (canceled):

Claim 31 (previously presented): A dipeptide salt or ester according to claim 24, wherein R_{13} is a group of the formula



Claim 32 (New): An oligopeptide, salt or ester according to claim 12, wherein X is either -H; -OH; or -COOH.

Claim 33 (New): An oligopeptide according to claim 1, or a salt or ester thereof, wherein said oligopeptide has the following structure:



Claim 34 (New) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a fluorine containing oligopeptide, salt or ester according to claim 1 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, diluent or carrier.

Claim 35 (New) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a fluorine containing oligopeptide, salt or ester according to claim 5 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, diluent or carrier.

Claim 36 (New) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a fluorine containing oligopeptide, salt or ester according to claim 7 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, diluent or carrier.

Claim 37 (New) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a fluorine containing oligopeptide, salt or ester according to claim 12 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, diluent or carrier.

Claim 38 (New) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a fluorine containing oligopeptide, salt or ester according to claim 32 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, diluent or carrier.

Claim 39 (New): A method of inhibiting Hepatitis C virus (HCV) NS3 protease activity, and/or of treating or ameliorating HCV infection comprising administering to a human or animal subject, a therapeutically or prophylactically effective amount of a composition according to claim 34.

Claim 40 (New): A method of inhibiting Hepatitis C virus (HCV) NS3 protease activity, and/or of treating or ameliorating HCV infection comprising administering to a human or animal subject, a therapeutically or prophylactically effective amount of a composition according to claim 36.

Claim 41 (New): A method of inhibiting Hepatitis C virus (HCV) NS3 protease activity, and/or of treating or ameliorating HCV infection comprising administering to a human or animal subject, a therapeutically or prophylactically effective amount of a composition according to claim 38.